GENDER INEQUALITY

Transgender rights: How supportive is your country?

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Out of 23 countries surveyed, Spain in the most supportive of transgender rights Image: REUTERS/Francois Lenoir

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Spain is the country most supportive of transgender rights, according to a poll published in December 2016. The survey was conducted as a collaboration between BuzzFeed News, polling firm Ipsos and the UCLA Law School's Williams Institute. Buzzfeed has called the survey the "first of its kind".

Participants from 23 countries were asked their opinion on a variety of transgender issues ranging from protection against discrimination to more specific rights such as marriage and adoption. Countries were ranked with an overall score out of 100 points.

Those who were younger and those with higher levels of income or education were generally more supportive of trans people. Women also showed more support for transgender rights than men.

Spain topped the list with a score of 81, ahead of Sweden (77) and Argentina (76), despite the fact that only 23% of Spanish people said they even knew a transgender person (9th place).

Overall Public Support for Transgender Rights

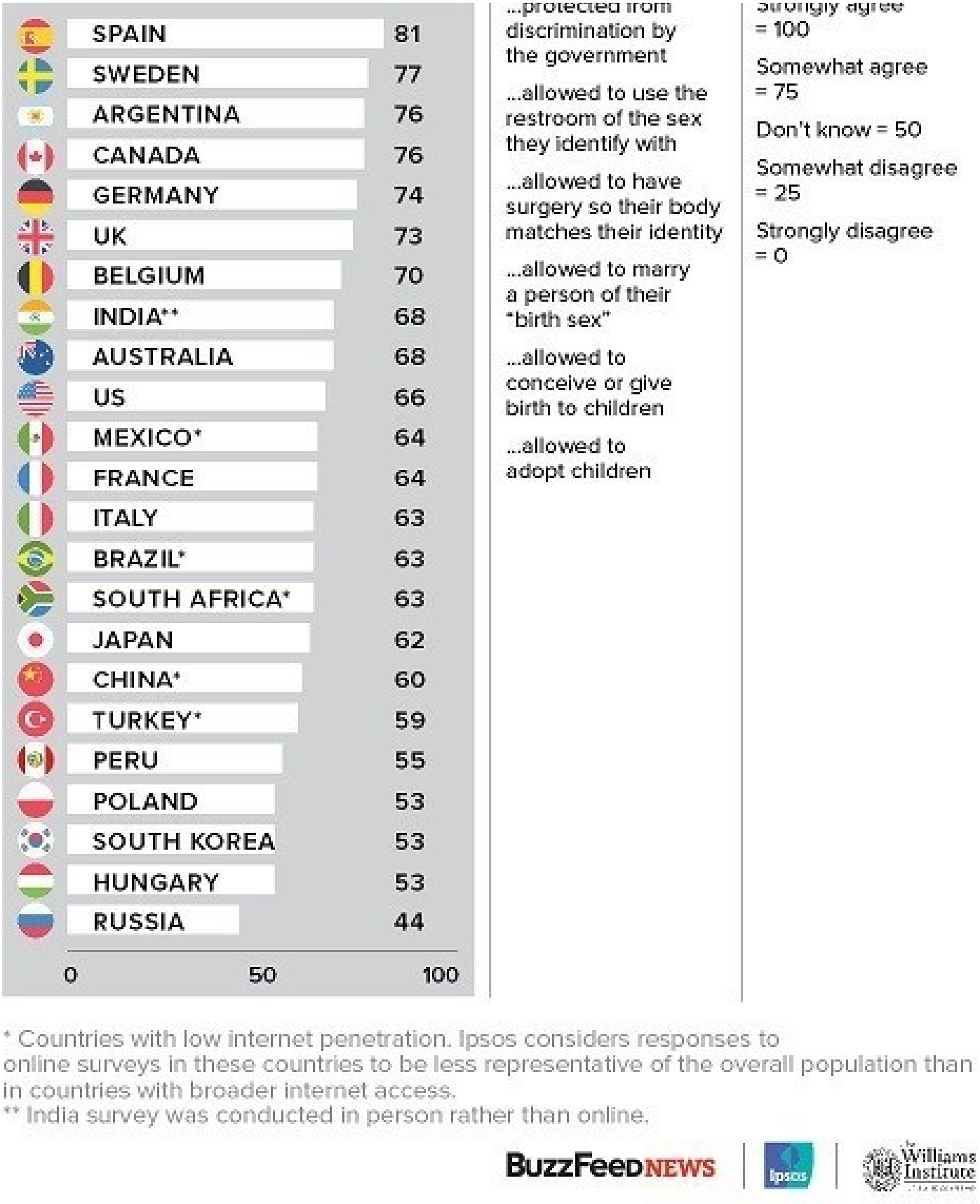
Ipsos surveyed people in 23 countries about their views on six policy questions affecting transgender people. BuzzFeed News assigned each response a score — from 0 for "Strongly disagree" to 100 for "Strongly agree" — and averaged those scores for each country.

Here's how the countries scored:

We asked if they believe that transgender people should be...

BuzzFeed News scored each respondent's answer on the six questions based on the following scale:

Strongly agree



Overall public support for transgender rights Image: BuzzFeed News/Ipsos/UCLA Law School's Williams Institute

Six countries fell below the 60 points mark, while Russia was the only country to

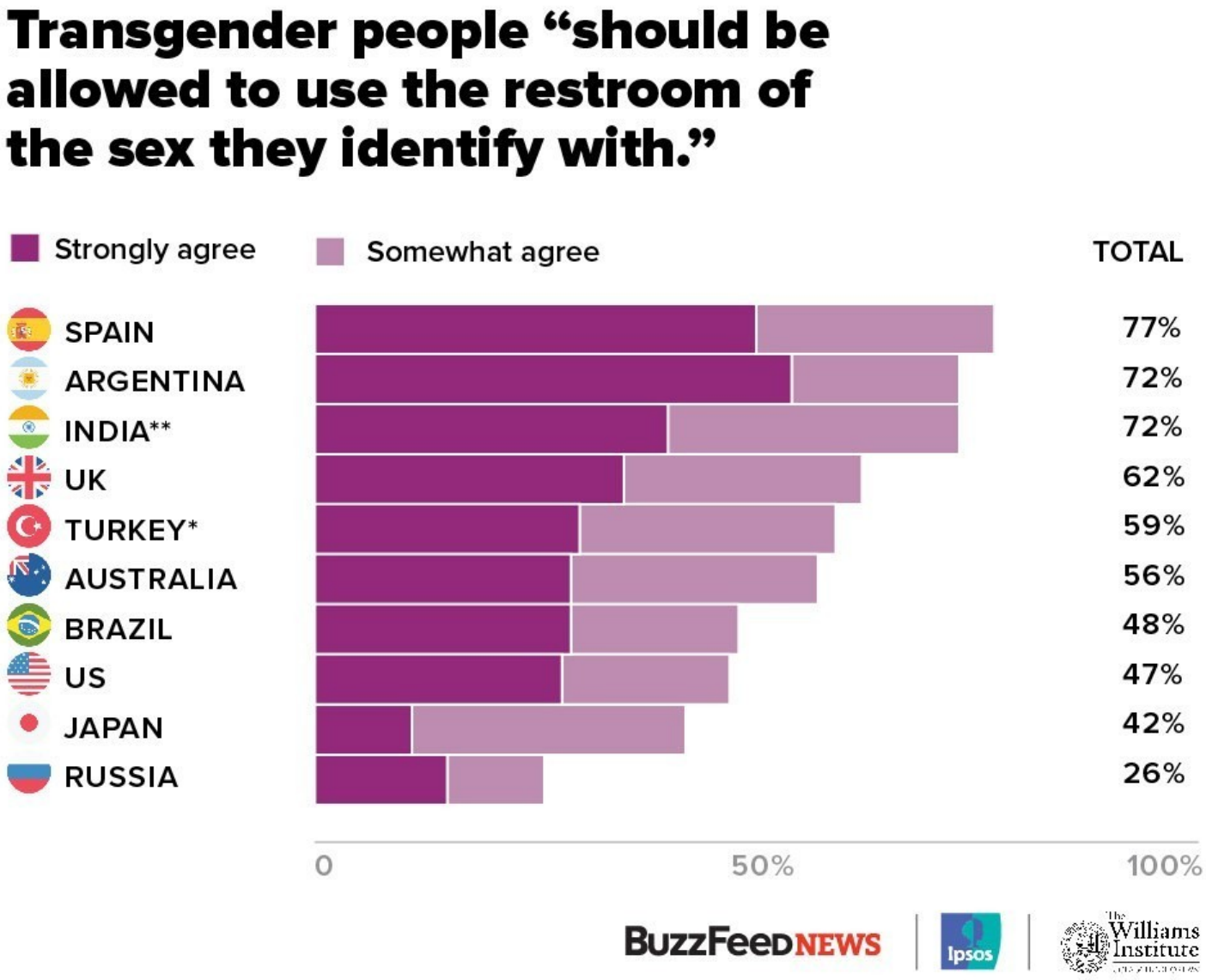
Six countries fell below the 50 points mark, while Russia was the only country to score below 50 points overall.

Supportive, but to which transgender rights?

The Williams Institute optimistically reported that "in all 23 countries, majorities of survey respondents supported important transgender rights", though the level of support from each country depended greatly on which right, in particular, was being addressed.

In all 23 countries, a majority of those surveyed said they supported the right to change identity documents, although most still felt some kind of regulation from medical professionals and governments was necessary. In 21 countries, a majority said they supported policies banning discrimination against transgender people. Support dwindled, however, when asking about specific rights such as the right to marry (16 countries), to adopt (14 countries), or to access the public restroom of one's gender identity (15 countries).

In the United States, where access to public restrooms has become the focal point of transgender rights, only 47% of those surveyed said they thought transgender people should have the right to use the restroom of the sex the identify with.



Access to public restrooms has become a focal point of transgender rights. Image: BuzzFeed News/Ipsos/UCLA Law School's Williams Institute

Actually knowing a trans person can have a huge impact

Actually knowing a transgender person makes a big difference. The Williams Institute explains that: “Having transgender friends and family members has a strong effect on support for transgender rights. Those who report having such relationships are significantly more supportive of transgender rights than those who report not having such relationships.”

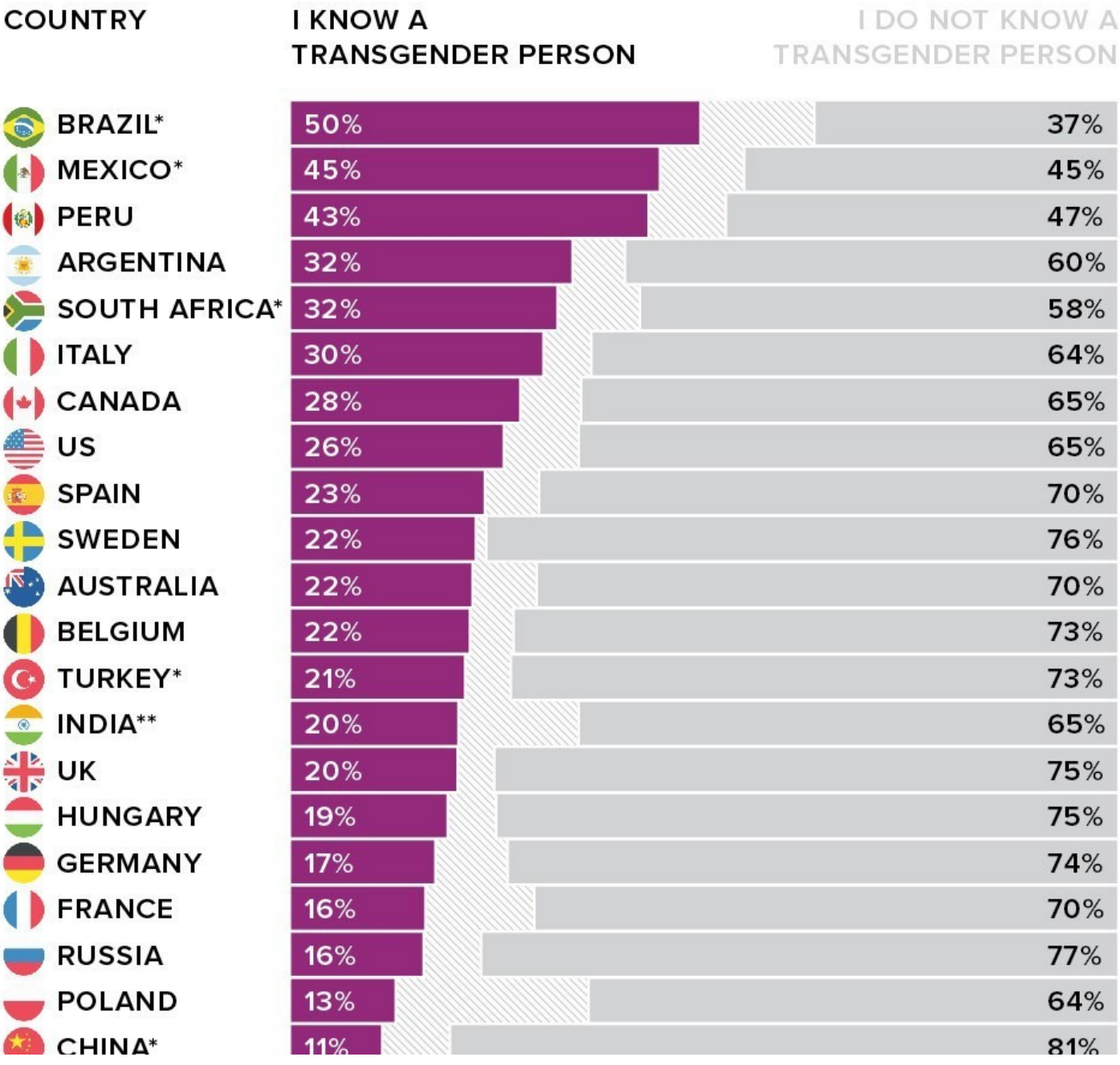
The survey found that those who knew a transgender person were 24.6% more likely to support transgender rights.

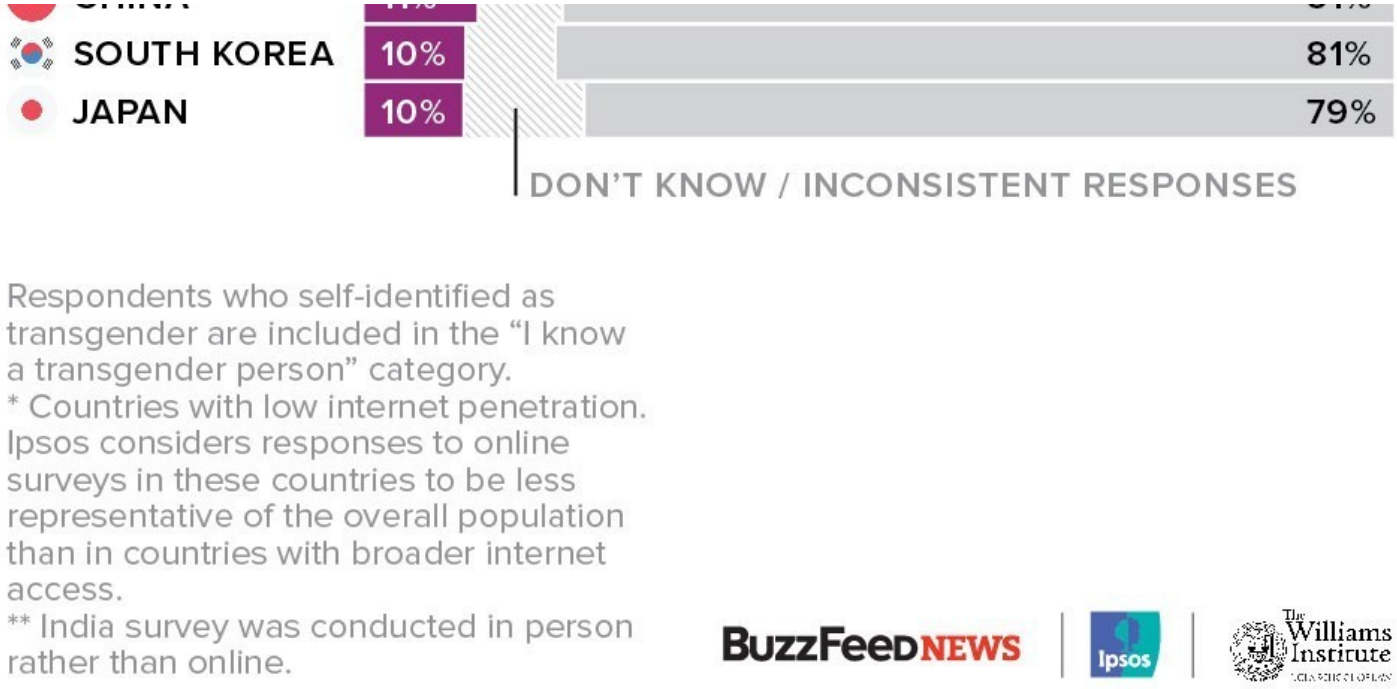
Those findings echo a study published in *Science Magazine* last year which showed that a 10-minute conversation about transgender rights can not only influence people’s opinions, but can also make them less likely to believe negative portrayals of trans people in the future.

The difficulty remains that most people do not know anyone who is transgender. While the community is growing rapidly, the number of people who say they know a trans person stands at 26%. That number is actually *down* slightly from a Pew Survey conducted in 2016.

Worldwide, not a single country had a majority of people who said they knew a trans person. Brazil scored highest, with 50%.

How familiar are you with a transgender person?




SOUTH KOREA
10%
81%
JAPAN
10%
79%
DON'T KNOW / INCONSISTENT RESPONSES
Respondents who self-identified as transgender are included in the "I know a transgender person" category.
* Countries with low internet penetration. Ipsos considers responses to online surveys in these countries to be less representative of the overall population than in countries with broader internet access.
** India survey was conducted in person rather than online.
BuzzFeedNEWS
Ipsos
The Williams Institute

Transgender rights are human rights, but how familiar are you with transgender people? Image: BuzzFeed News/Ipsos/UCLA Law School's Williams Institute

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The survey was conducted using an international sample of over 17,000 participants from 23 countries. Participants answered questions between July and August of 2016.

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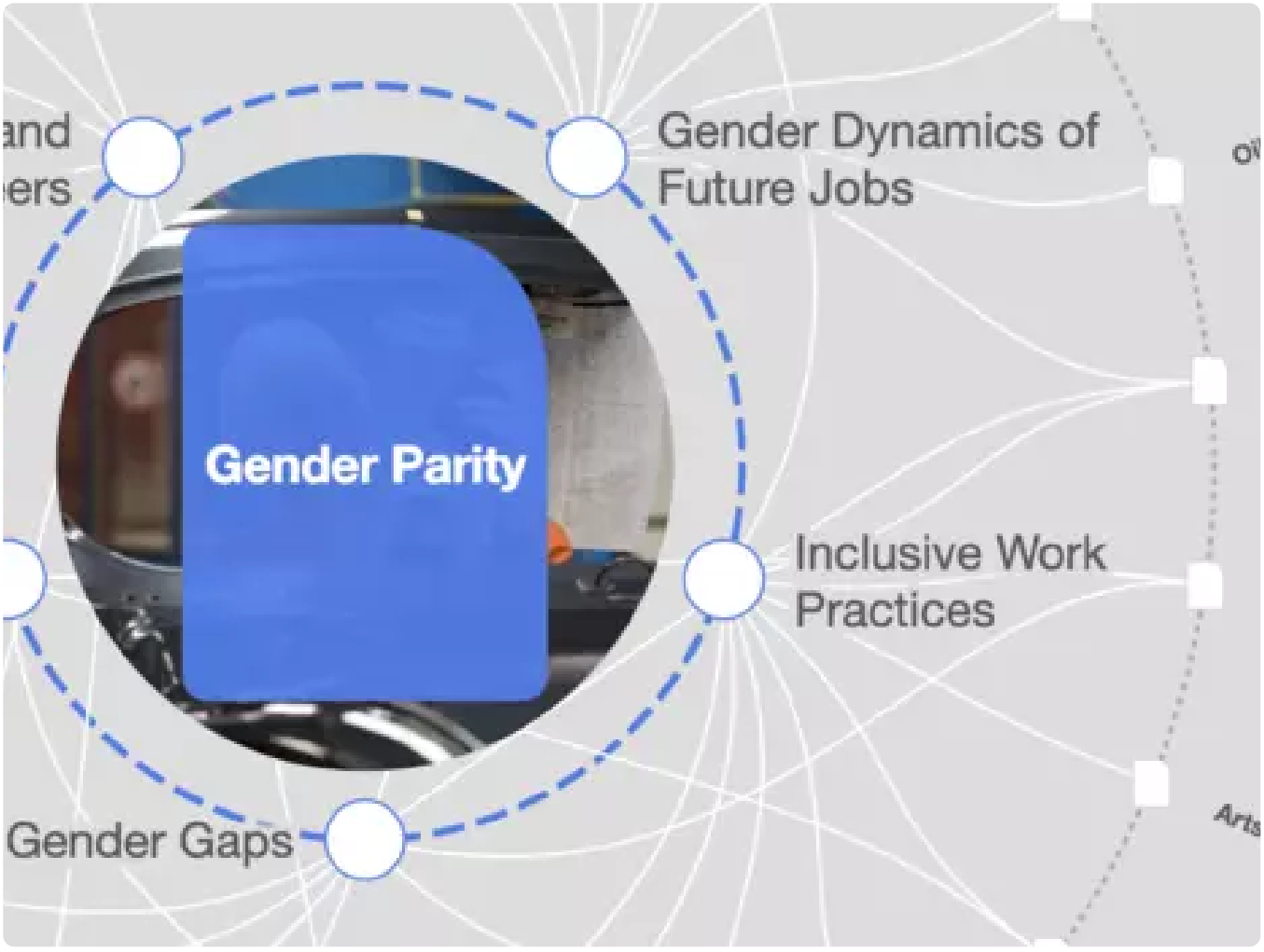

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